

# Rules of the Game

## Carrying Things (Part Three)

By Skip Williams



Last week, we considered quadrupeds and their carrying capacities. This week, we'll wrap up our look at carrying capacities by looking at a few miscellaneous topics related to the subjects of lifting and carrying.

### Extradimensional Spaces

Everyone knows you can haul around more loot in a bag or backpack than you can just using your hands, and most adventurers equip themselves with at least a few containers for transporting the spoils of victory. The most useful containers for carrying piles of treasure are literally bigger on the inside than on the outside. These are *bags of holding*, *portable holes*, and a few related items, such as *Heward's handy haversack*. These are collectively known as extradimensional spaces, though this is not a defined game term.

Extradimensional spaces are notorious for creating spectacular and dangerous effects when placed inside each other; however, the dangers can be somewhat overrated. One *bag of holding* can be placed safely inside another (of course, the first *bag's* weight counts against what the second *bag* can hold). Likewise, one *portable hole* can be placed safely inside another.

A *bag of holding* placed inside a *portable hole*, however, creates a rift to the Astral Plane. (See the *bag of holding* excerpt.) Oddly enough, objects aren't drawn through the gate.

#### From the *bag of holding* description on page 248 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*:

If a *bag of holding* is placed within a *portable hole* (page 264), a rift to the Astral Plane is torn in the space: Bag and hole alike are sucked into the void and forever lost. If a *portable hole* is placed within a *bag of holding*, it opens a gate to the Astral Plane: The hole, the bag, and any creatures within a 10-foot radius are drawn there, destroying the *portable hole* and *bag of holding* in the process.

It's best to treat a *Heward's handy haversack* as a *bag of holding* when it interacts with a *portable hole*.

Other interactions between extradimensional spaces are possible. For example, the *rope trick* and *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* both create extradimensional spaces. The *rope trick* spell description makes a passing mention of "hazards" associated with placing one extradimensional space inside another, but gives no details. (See the *rope trick* excerpt.)

I recommend that you ignore this reference. Your campaign won't be improved if *rope trick* effects implode when someone carries a *bag of holding* or *portable hole* inside. A *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* should likewise prove benign if someone carries a *bag of holding* or *portable hole* inside.

### What Can Fit Inside a *Bag of Holding*?

Sometimes player characters can get downright silly about what they place in their *bags of holding* and will attempt to stuff inside it anything that's not nailed down. Player characters also love to stuff their comrades, living

or dead, into their *bags of holding*. Since most bodies are somewhat pliable, it's fine to simply use a bag's weight limit to determine how many creatures fit inside. There should be a reasonable limit to just how big a rigid object can fit inside a *bag of holding*. The table below includes some suggested limits.

**From the *rope trick* description on page 273 of the *Player's Handbook*:**

*Note:* It is hazardous to create an extradimensional space within an existing extradimensional space or to take an extradimensional space into an existing one.

**From the *bag of holding* description on page 248 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*:**

If living creatures are placed within the bag, they can survive for up to 10 minutes, after which time they suffocate.

The rules say a living creature can breathe inside a *bag of holding* for up to 10 minutes. That's not a bad number for a type I *bag of holding*, which has 30 cubic feet of space inside. The larger bags ought to contain a bit more air, and I've included some suggested numbers. The numbers given are for **Medium** creatures. **Small** creatures use only half as much air and can breathe inside a *bag of holding* for twice the listed time. Double the breathing time for each additional size category below Small (x4 for **Tiny** creatures, x8 for **Diminutive** creatures, and x16 for **Fine** creatures).

When characters use *bags of holding* to carry essential supplies, such as water, it's useful to know how much water a bag can hold. Water weighs about 8-1/2 pounds per gallon, so this isn't a difficult calculation, but I've included it as well.

Bag Type	Inside Dimension[1]	Breathing Time	Water Capacity[2]
I	5 ft.	10 minutes	30 gallons
II	8 ft.	15 minutes	60 gallons
III	10 ft.	20 minutes	120 gallons
IV	12 ft.	25 minutes	180 gallons

1. This limits the size of any inflexible object placed inside the *bag of holding*.
2. These numbers have been rounded off to the nearest whole factor of 10.

**What Can Fit Inside a *Portable Hole*?**

The description for the *portable hole* includes information about its dimensions (see the *portable hole* excerpt). As described in the excerpt, the space inside a *portable hole* is a cylinder 6 feet wide and 10 feet deep, which contains about 280 cubic feet of space. That's enough to hold about 100,000 standard coins or 2,100 gallons of water.

**Weights for a Few Unusual Items**

The equipment tables in the *Player's Handbook* don't quite cover everything a character might decide to pick up and carry. Here are weight figures for a few such items.

Item	Weight
Armchair	20 lb.
Chair, simple	5 lb.
Door, iron	3,200 lb.
Door, stone	2,200 lb.
Door, simple wooden	150 lb.
Door, good wooden	225 lb.
Door, strong wooden	350 lb.
Footstool	2 lb.
Petrified creature	x8 lb.
Spirits, cask	18 lb.
Spirits, hogshead	750 lb.
Spirits, keg	90 lb.
Spirits, barrel	375 lb.
Statue, Colossal metal	1,750 tons
Statue, Colossal stone	1,250 tons
Statue, Gargantuan metal	875 tons
Statue, Gargantuan stone	625 tons
Statue, Huge metal	112 tons
Statue, Huge stone	80 tons
Statue, Large metal	14 tons
Statue, Large stone	10 tons
Statue, Medium metal	3,500 lb.
Statue, Medium stone	2,500 lb.
Statue, Small metal	420 lb.
Statue, Small stone	300 lb.
Table, banquet	225 lb.
Table, small	60 lb.
Tapestry	100 lb.
Workbench	300 lb.

### Table Notes

#### From the *portable hole* description on page 264 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*:

When opened fully, a portable hole is 6 feet in diameter, but it can be folded up to be as small as a pocket handkerchief. When spread upon any surface, it causes an extradimensional space 10 feet deep to come into being. This hole can be picked up from inside or out by simply taking hold of the edges of the cloth and folding it up. Either way, the entrance disappears, but anything inside the hole remains.

The only air in the hole is that which enters when the hole is opened. It contains enough air to supply one Medium creature or two Small creatures for 10 minutes. (See Suffocation, page 304.)

Here are a few notes to clarify the table entries.

**Armchair:** This entry assumes fine hardwood construction and a leather or cloth cover. The weight given is for a chair built for a Medium creature. Cut the weight in half for each size category below Medium and double the weight for each size category above Medium.

**Chair, Simple:** This is a plain chair made from inexpensive hardwood, and it has no arms. See the armchair entry to adjust the weight for larger or smaller creatures.

**Doors:** All doors are assumed to be 8 feet high and 5 feet wide, with thickness as noted on Table 3-10 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The listed weight includes hinges, handle, and lock appropriate for the door's overall construction.

**Footstool:** This assumes a plain, wooden stool about 6 inches high, with a round top about 18 inches across.

**Petrified Creature:** To calculate a petrified creature's weight, multiply the creature's normal weight by 8 and add the weight of any gear the creature was carrying at the time of petrification. When a creature is magically turned to stone, it and all its gear turn to stone. This tends to make metal gear weigh a little less, but nonmetal gear gets heavier, so the two tend to average out.

**Table, Banquet:** This table is built to comfortably seat twelve Medium creatures (about 4-1/2 feet wide and 8 feet long). See the armchair entry to adjust the weight for a table built to seat larger or smaller creatures.

**Table, Small:** The represents a plain wooden table that might be found in a modest home or merchant's shop. It's big enough to seat six Medium creatures (about 3-1/2 feet wide and 7 feet long). See the armchair entry to adjust the weight for a table built to seat larger or smaller creatures.

**Spirits:** The spirits entry assumes a barrel-shaped container made from hardwood staves and iron hoops. A cask contains 2 gallons of liquid, a hogshead holds 88 gallons, a keg holds 10 gallons, and a barrel holds 44 gallons. You can use these figures for any liquid-based contents. Containers with dry contents might weigh anywhere from one quarter to two-thirds as much.

**Statues:** Metal statues assume hollow construction from bronze or wrought iron. Stone statues are solid marble. Statue sizes refer to creature sizes from Table 7-1 in the *Monster Manual*, and they represent figures in the mid range for each size category. A statue of the listed size could easily weigh anywhere from one half to twice the listed weight. All statue weights include an attached base or pedestal.

**Tapestry:** Assumes a woven wool tapestry about 10 feet square and about 1/4 inch thick. You also can use this figure for carpets or rugs.

**Workbench:** This is a bench about 3 feet high, 3 feet wide, and 8 feet long, with sturdy legs and top and a shelf or footrest below.

## In Conclusion

That wraps up our look at carrying things. I hope my efforts save you some time and aggravation at the gaming table.

## About the Author

**Skip Williams** keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of ***Dragon** Magazine* for many years. Skip is a co-designer of the **D&D** 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

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